



Mary Lazich

Wisconsin State Senator

Senate District 28

Assembly Committee on Judiciary and Ethics Testimony Assembly Bill 427 September 13, 2007

Good morning, Committee Chair Gundrum and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to the Assembly Committee on Judiciary and Ethics on Assembly Bill 427. Assembly Bill 427 is a prevention bill. The goal of this legislation is to prevent women from suffering post-abortion trauma.

Abortion trauma is real and is as common as other forms of post-traumatic stress disorder. As women that have had abortions age and realize the impact of the action, many suffer. Assembly Bill 427 prevents trauma, a real phenomenon documented by studies and surveys.

Under the bill, the physician must determine whether the woman's consent to an abortion is voluntary. If the physician has reason to believe that the woman is in danger of being physically harmed or that someone is coercing the woman to consent to an abortion against her will, the physician must inform the woman about services for victims or individuals at risk of domestic abuse. If a woman states that she wishes to call for assistance, the physician must provide her with private access to a telephone.

A physician counseling a woman considering an abortion shall, in person, inform the woman that it is against the law for any person to use threats, intimidation, force or coercion to compel her to have an abortion against her will.

The woman is also to be informed that she has a right to refuse to consent to an abortion and that a person may not threaten, intimidate, force or coerce her to consent to the procedure against her will.

The Elliot Institute, a non-profit corporation performs original research and education on the impact of abortion on women, reports that the post-abortion effect on women is devastating: They are more likely to commit suicide, suffer



long-term clinical depression, become hospitalized, abuse drugs and alcohol and develop nervous and sleep disorders.

The Elliot Institute refers to abortion as the un-choice:

- 64% involve coercion.
- Pressure can become violent.
- 67% not counseled.
- 65% suffer trauma.

The Institute says, "Intense pressure to abort can come from husbands, parents, doctors, partners, counselors, or close friends and family. They may threaten or blackmail a woman into abortion. These are not idle threats. Coercion can escalate to violence. Women who resist abortion have been beaten, tortured and killed. One husband jumped on his wife's stomach to force an abortion. A mother forced her daughter at gunpoint to go to the abortion clinic."

Reasons women give for having abortion include: being forced by a mother, the father was opposed to the birth, no other option was given, the family stopped giving support, and I would have been kicked out of the house.

A woman, upon learning she is pregnant, can suffer overwhelming emotions brought on by doubts and fears. Facing unkind reactions, she feels she has let everyone down, that she made a huge mistake she's entirely responsible for and that in order to eliminate the problem she needs to give in to coercion.

Women enduring coercion are mentally and physically worn down. They arrive at clinics feeling powerless. Believing they do not have options, they sign all the obligatory paperwork.

There have been accounts of women being dragged into clinics by the neck and hair. Others have been seen mouthing the words "help me" through car windows as they were driven to clinic parking lots.

I want to prevent the emotional and physical trauma women experience. Please support Assembly Bill 427, legislation to prevent coercive abortions and to prevent post-abortion trauma.



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Testimony of
Susan Armacost,
Legislative Director
Wisconsin Right to Life

in support of AB 427

before the
Assembly Judiciary & Ethics Committee
September 13, 2007

Good morning Representative Gundrum and committee members. I am Susan Armacost, Legislative Director for Wisconsin Right to Life. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in favor of the *Coercive Abortion Prevention Act* (AB 427).

This legislation is badly needed in our state and in every state in our nation to protect women who are being coerced into having abortions against their will.

We are absolutely dumbfounded and in disbelief that organizations who support what they call "the freedom to choose" are not supporting this legislation! You would think that they would support a bill that enhances "the freedom to choose" by making sure that no woman is forced by someone else to have an abortion against her will. If a woman is being forced to submit to an abortion, is that freedom of choice? Hardly!

But according to the advocates of abortion, AB 427 is just an attempt to make it more difficult for women to have abortions. In the case of abortionists performing an abortion on a woman who doesn't want one, it isn't a case of being "difficult"....it is against the law and should never happen!

Some are claiming that Wisconsin's current informed consent law is sufficient to prevent coerced abortions. Section 253.10 of the Wisconsin statutes does state that an abortion may not be performed unless the woman gives her voluntary consent which must be freely given and without coercion by any person. However, there are no requirements under current law to provide the mechanisms to ensure that the woman's consent is truly

voluntary and without coercion.

Given what is at stake, women need information specifically presented to them up front by the abortionist so they are made fully aware that it is against the law for the abortionist to perform an abortion on a woman against her will. If the woman fears she will suffer physical harm from an individual who is coercing her to have an abortion, it should be incumbent upon the abortionist to provide her with the means to seek help and resources.

The abortionist is not currently required to discuss these issues with her. Unless these issues are discussed, the woman has no knowledge of her rights in this regard and the abortionist has no way of determining whether a woman is being coerced to have an abortion or whether she is in physical danger from the person coercing her. This must be part of the discussion!

Assembly Bill 427 requires that the physician who is to perform or induce the abortion determine whether or not the woman's consent is, in fact, voluntary. If the physician has reason to suspect that the woman is in danger of being physically harmed by anyone who is coercing the woman to consent to an abortion against her will, the physician must inform the woman of services for victims or individuals at risk of domestic abuse and provide her with private access to a telephone if she states that she wishes to call for assistance.

Assembly Bill 427 also requires that the physician or other qualified physician inform the woman that she has a right to refuse to consent to an

abortion, that her consent is not voluntary if anyone is coercing her to consent to an abortion against her will, and that it is unlawful for the physician to perform or induce the abortion without her voluntary consent.

It is unfathomable that organizations who claim to advocate for women's rights would have concerns about legislation that would protect women from being coerced into having abortions and that would provide physicians the means to determine if a woman's consent to an abortion is voluntary and without coercion.

Today, you will hear from some courageous women who will tell you their personal stories. You will also hear from representatives of organizations that work with post-abortive women ... many of whom faced coercion to have an abortion. There are others who could not be here today but have presented written testimony to share with you. I have attached their testimonies to mine.

Erin Peterson of Burlington would like us to share with you that when she was on the table for the abortion, she realized she did not want to go through with it. She pleaded with the nurse that she wanted the procedure stopped. She remembers saying, "Please stop. I don't want to do this." The nurse merely replied, "Don't worry, everything will be fine." But everything was not fine. You can read Erin's complete story. Erin would like you to support AB 427.

Terry Baudhuin of Menomonee Falls wants you to know that as a crisis pregnancy counselor, he often speaks to women who are facing coercion from others to force them to have an abortion. One young woman told

Terry, "My mother is insisting I have an abortion or I'll be thrown out."

Another young woman told Terry her father said he was giving her no choice but to have an abortion. You can read Terry's full statement. He, too, urges you to support AB 427.

A 19 year old Maine girl was bound with duct tape and rope by her parents and forced into a car. Her parents attempted to drive the girl to an abortion clinic in New York for an abortion. The girl, Katelyn Kampf was able to escape when they stopped to use a restroom. Her parents were arrested and charged with kidnapping.

These are not isolated incidents. The *Medical Science Monitor* reported in 2004 that according to a study of American post-abortive women, 64% of the women felt pressured by others to have an abortion. They are intimidated into aborting through financial, relational and emotional threats.

Assembly Bill 427 is greatly needed. Wisconsin Right to Life urges your support for this important legislation.

Thank you.

Testimony of Erin Peterson on AB 427 on 9/13/07

My name is Erin Peterson. I am unable to be here in person today, however I want to share my personal testimony to convey this message to the committee - "I support Assembly Bill 427, the Coercive Abortion Prevention Act."

Beginning with a bit of personal background, I started drinking when I was 13 years old. I saw many adults around me drinking, laughing, and having a grand time. I was immature and quite shy and the alcohol loosened me to to be myself - to let my true feelings come out. I believe that this was the beginning of the end for me. I liked the high and it brought me out of my shell. It gave me a boldness that I otherwise did not possess. As you can well imagine, there were plenty of other activities that went along with drinking. There was smoking, many kinds of drugs, and plenty of sexual activity. At the young age of 15 I suspected I might be pregnant and went to my family physician for confirmation. I was indeed pregnant. I received no counsel from the physician; I was left on my own to make a life long, life altering decision between keeping this baby and having an abortion. My immediate reaction was to have an abortion. I felt alone and without help, hope, or support. I was ashamed and afraid. As I entered the abortion clinic I felt cold and numb. I was given an exam and told that I was not as far along as they had expected; and was told that this was good news for me because the cost would be reduced. Apprehensive yet determined to "fix" this "problem" the nurse began to prepare me for the procedure. I changed into a gown, was laid on a table with wheels, and given what was called a "twilight" anesthesia. As my body began to relax, I was suddenly very afraid and began telling the nurse that I didn't want to go through with it. I pleaded with her to stop the procedure. I specifically remember saying "please, stop, I don't want to do this". The words that came next from the lips of the nurse were one of the most offensive, enormous lies I have ever been told. "Don't worry, everything will be just fine. For me and thousands of women just like me, everything was not ok. I was moved into a room with several other crying distant women. It seemed surreal. I felt as if this could not possibly be happening. I suffered from loneliness, depression, and suicidal thoughts for the next several years. I remain wounded in my core because my situation is irreversible. I will always wonder what could have been had I been taken seriously while pleading with the nurse to "please stop, I don't want to go through with this". Through counsel and study and personal faith, I've been able to grow stronger and more confident as a person; however there are life long consequences because truly I was not given the last minute opportunity to choose another path. In my current work with others who are faced with the choice of deciding to keep or abort their children, I urge them to find their inner strength, and their voice, and to stand firm in their decision. In closing, I urge you to vote in favor of AB 427, so that young girls will not have to go through the emotional pain and regret that so many women in our nation are living with today.

Thank you for hearing my testimony,

Erin Peterson

Mary Klaver

From: Terry Baudhuin [tbaudhuin@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Wednesday, September 12, 2007 11:24 AM
To: Mary Klaver
Subject: Wisconsin Assembly Bill 427
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Red

I can not attend the session on 9/13/2007 but wish to submit the following statement in support of AB427. My name is Terrence Baudhuin and I reside at W131N7979 Country Club Dr., Menomonee Falls, WI., 53051. For the past ten years I have been a volunteer on the O'Meara Life Resources telephone pregnancy helpline. For the same ten years I have spent time each week praying outside of an abortion clinic in Milwaukee. As a phone line volunteer I speak each week with girls and women who are in a crisis pregnancy situation and are usually seeking information about abortion. There have been many occasions in which the female caller has revealed some form of coercion to have an abortion. They've said, "My boyfriend is forcing me to have an abortion", or, "My fiance said he will leave me if I don't have an abortion.", or, "My mother is insisting that I have an abortion or I'll be thrown out.", or "My father says I have no choice except to have an abortion." In most cases these women were, at least, exploring alternatives to abortion or stated their direct opposition to abortion. As I pray outside the clinic I have witnessed lots of young girls, 14 or 15 or 16 years old, being lead in by parents or grandparents to have an abortion performed on them. I've seen these young girls sobbing and crying as they have been supported under their arms and lead in. I have heard girls saying "no.no, no" as they were lead in. From my personal witness, coercion to have an abortion certainly takes place in Wisconsin. I urge the committee to support AB 427. Respectfully, Terrence Baudhuin 9/12/2007

9/12/2007